

Wasserman	Watson Coleman	Yarmuth
Schultz	Welch	
Waters, Maxine	Wilson (FL)	

NOT VOTING—9

Crowley	Hinojosa	Salmon
Fattah	Johnson, E. B.	Swalwell (CA)
Herrera Beutler	Johnson, Sam	Takai

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). There are 2 minutes remaining.

□ 2206

So the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: "A bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2017 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

AUTHORIZING THE CLERK TO MAKE CORRECTIONS IN ENGROSSMENT OF H.R. 4909, NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2017

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Clerk be authorized to make technical corrections in the engrossment of H.R. 4909, to include corrections in spelling, punctuation, section and title numbering, cross-referencing, conforming amendments to the table of contents and short titles, and the insertion of appropriate headings.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

HOOR OF MEETING ON TOMORROW

Mr. DENT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 9 a.m. tomorrow.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Pennsylvania?

There was no objection.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION AND VETERANS AFFAIRS AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2017

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DENT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 4974, and that I may include tabular material on the same.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Pennsylvania?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 736 and rule

XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 4974.

The Chair appoints the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. COLLINS) to preside over the Committee of the Whole.

□ 2209

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 4974) making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2017, and for other purposes, with Mr. COLLINS of Georgia in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read the first time.

The gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. DENT) and the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BISHOP) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

□ 2210

Mr. DENT. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Today, it is my honor and privilege to bring H.R. 4974, the fiscal year 2017 Military Construction and Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies Appropriations Act to the House for consideration.

I present this bill alongside my very good friend and ranking member of the subcommittee, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BISHOP), who has been an essential partner all along the way. I greatly appreciate the participation and support of our committee members on both sides of the aisle as we considered priorities and funding levels for the important programs in our bill.

We analyzed the budget request, developed questions, and held oversight hearings to get direct feedback from members of all the services, the Department of Defense leadership, the Secretary of the VA, and the VA inspector general. We received over 1,000 requests from Members, again, from both sides of the aisle, and we gave them full and fair consideration.

The bill is also the product of actively listening to the concerns of our veterans and veteran advocates, servicemembers, spouses, caregivers, military family members, and healthcare providers both within and outside the VA over the past year.

As we consider this bill, I can't proceed further without noting that this subcommittee has a formidable level of support from the chair and ranking member of the full committee. So I thank Chairman ROGERS and the ranking member, Mrs. LOWEY. Their attention, oversight, and genuine care for the military and veterans has been inspiring.

To round out the team, we have some great support from our professional

staff: Maureen Holohan, Sue Quantius, Sarah Young, Tracey Russell, and Matt Washington on the committee staff; and Sean Snyder, Drew Kent, and Heather Smith on my personal staff. I would also like to note Michael Reed and Michael Calcagni with Mr. BISHOP of Georgia's office. We couldn't do it without them.

I would also like to note the retirement of the senior member of our subcommittee, SAM FARR. He has been on this subcommittee since 1999. In our full committee meeting, we went into detail about Sam's accomplishments on this subcommittee, including being the architect of the Monterey model, which is now the benchmark for successful public-private partnership in a community with a base closure. Sam, wherever you may be, your commitment, passion, and good humor will be missed. All the best to you in your pending retirement.

H.R. 4974 demonstrates our firm commitment to fully supporting our Nation's veterans and servicemembers. Our investment of \$81.6 billion for military construction, VA, and related agencies, \$1.2 billion over last year's level, is unprecedented. The bill addresses issues to help veterans in every part of the country—every congressional district—and our troops around the world.

This bill provides comprehensive support for servicemembers, military families, and veterans. It supports our troops with the facilities and services necessary to maintain readiness and morale at bases here in the States and overseas. It provides for Defense Department schools and health clinics that take care of our military families.

The bill funds our veteran healthcare systems to ensure that our promise to care for those who sacrificed in defense of this great Nation continues as those men and women return home. We owe this to our veterans and are committed to sustained oversight so that programs deliver what they promise and taxpayers are well served by the investments we make.

On the military construction side, the bill provides a total of \$7.9 billion for military construction projects and family housing, including base and overseas contingency operations funding, OCO funding—an increase of \$250 million over the President's request.

This funding meets DOD's most critical needs, including priority projects for combatant commanders and funding new mission requirements.

It provides \$304 million for military medical facilities. It provides \$246 million for Department of Defense educational facilities, for construction or renovation of four schools. It supports our Guard and Reserve through \$673 million for facilities in 21 States.

It includes \$514 million for projects from the Department of Defense's unfunded priority list, benefiting the most critical projects—as identified by the services—that were not included in the budget request.